

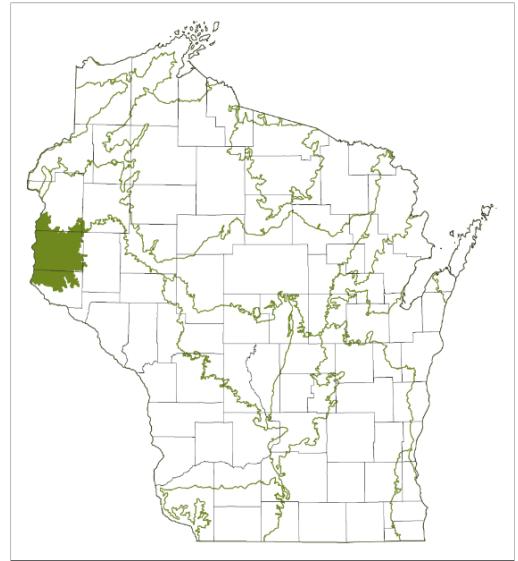
# Western Prairie Public Input Summary

November 2018

The initial public involvement phase for master planning properties within the Western Prairie Ecological Landscape was open from October 23 – November 13, 2018. The purpose of the initial public involvement phase is to notify the public regarding the department's intent to plan for properties in the region and to identify management and use issues to be evaluated during the planning process.

The department followed the Western Prairie Regional Master Plan's Public Involvement Plan. An open house was held for people to comment on properties in this landscape in Baldwin at the St. Croix County Agricultural Center.

This public input process was conducted with the intention of gaining insight into public use and perspective on the management of properties in the planning process. The online public input form was open for anyone wishing to give input. The open house was similarly open to all who were interested in attending; and anyone who attended could submit input at the meeting. Neither represents a statistically valid survey sample and should not be read as such. Rather, the results of this process should be read as the views of those interested in offering their input on property use and management to the department. DNR values the input it has received as part of this process and will take this and other information into account during the planning process.



A public open house was held to collect input for the planning processes. The comments summarized in this section are those that relate to the Western Prairie. The public could access the public online survey through the Western Prairie Regional Master Plan website. We received 338 online surveys, three paper surveys, two emails and one phone call. Comments received are summarized below in three groups: natural resources management, recreation management, and property specific.

## PUBLIC INPUT RELATED TO NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Respondents utilizing the online input form indicated a high level of interest in invasive species management, native community management, game species management, fish habitat conservation, and rare species conservation. Those offering input regarding natural resources management across the Western Prairie:

- Expressed interest regarding invasive species management, especially buckthorn management in forested areas.
- Stated interest in protecting land and natural resources in this region.



## **PUBLIC INPUT RELATED TO RECREATION**

Those offering input regarding recreation across the Western Prairie:

- Suggested creating mountain, road and fat tire bike opportunities.
- Supported expanded camping opportunities.
- Recommended an expansion of multi-use trails (skiing, trail running, snowshoe, hiking) with potential connectivity to other public properties within the area.
- Emphasized the importance they saw in collaborative DNR partnerships with groups for managing the landscape for recreation.

## **PUBLIC INPUT RELATED TO SPECIFIC PROPERTIES**

DNR properties were specifically commented on in the online public input form, through paper comment forms, or at public meetings. Overall, the two state park properties received the most individual comments. These are covered below.

### Willow River State Park

- Support for maintenance of ski and snowshoe trails.
- Recommend addition of mountain and fat tire bike trails.
- Support for camper cabins for rent.
- Support for no wake use of lake when dam is rebuilt.
- Suggestions for improving parking availability near Willow River Falls.

### Kinnickinnic State Park

- Suggested campground development.
- Support for mountain and fat tire bike trails.
- Support for the winter cross-country ski trail grooming.
- Support for camper cabins for rent.
- Suggestions for managing invasive plants.